

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A substrate assembly, comprising:
a support surface; and
a plurality of high-K dielectric layers over said support surface, wherein a common metal is present in at least two adjacent layers of said plurality, and wherein at least two layers of said plurality exhibit different degrees of oxidation so that at least one layer of the plurality of high-K dielectric layers manifests greater oxidation than would an equivalent thickness of an underlying layer of the plurality, further wherein ~~the common metal does not diffuse from~~ the support surface remains substantially free of an oxide present in and into the plurality of high-K dielectric layers.
2. (Original) The substrate assembly in claim 1, wherein said plurality of high-K dielectric layers comprises a first high-K dielectric layer contacting said support surface.
3. (Original) The substrate assembly in claim 1, further comprising a barrier layer between said support surface and said plurality of high-K dielectric layers.
4. (Original) The substrate assembly in claim 1, wherein said support surface is a capacitor electrode.
5. (Previously Presented) The substrate assembly in claim 1, wherein said plurality of high-K dielectric layers defines a thickness of at most 200 angstroms.
6. (Original) The substrate assembly in claim 5, wherein said plurality of high-K dielectric layers comprises a first high-K dielectric layer contacting said support surface and defining a thickness of at least a monolayer.

7. (Previously Presented) The substrate assembly in claim 6, wherein said first high-K dielectric layer defines a thickness of at least 10 angstroms.
8. (Currently Amended) A capacitor dielectric, comprising:
- a first high-K capacitor dielectric comprising a metallic element; and
 - a second high-K capacitor dielectric comprising said metallic element, having a lower oxygen density than said first high-K capacitor dielectric, and contacting said first high-K capacitor dielectric, wherein the first high-K capacitor dielectric manifests a greater oxidation than would an equivalent thickness of the second high-K capacitor dielectric, further wherein the metallic element an oxide present in the first high-K dielectric layer and the second high-K dielectric layer is not diffused from into a surface supporting the first high-K dielectric layer and the second high-K dielectric layer.
9. (Original) The capacitor dielectric in claim 8, wherein said first high-K capacitor dielectric defines a first thickness; and wherein said second high-K capacitor dielectric defines a second thickness that is different from said first thickness.
10. (Original) The capacitor dielectric in claim 8, wherein said first high-K capacitor dielectric and said second high-K capacitor dielectric are oxides.
11. (Original) The capacitor dielectric in claim 10, wherein said first high-K capacitor dielectric is a first oxide; and wherein said second high-K capacitor dielectric is a second oxide different from said first oxide.
12. (Currently Amended) A capacitor dielectric, comprising:
- a first high-K capacitor dielectric comprising a metallic element; and
 - a second high-K capacitor dielectric comprising said metallic element and contacting said first high-K capacitor dielectric,

wherein said first high-K capacitor dielectric and said second high-K capacitor dielectric are oxides, wherein said first high-K capacitor dielectric contains a first amount of oxygen per unit volume, and wherein said second high-K capacitor dielectric contains a second amount of oxygen per unit volume different from said first amount, further wherein the first high-K capacitor dielectric manifests a greater oxidation than would an equivalent thickness of the second high-K capacitor dielectric, and ~~the metallic element is not diffused from~~ a surface supporting the first high-K dielectric layer and the second high-K dielectric layer remains substantially free of the oxides.

13. (Currently Amended) A capacitor structure, comprising:

a first electrode layer;

a dielectric layer disposed over said first electrode layer, wherein said dielectric layer comprises a plurality of consecutively-positioned sub-layers, wherein each of said sub-layers comprises a high-dielectric-constant material, wherein said dielectric layer comprises an element common to all sub-layers of said plurality, and wherein one of said sub-layers is more oxidized than another of said sub-layers so that at least one of the sub-layers of the dielectric layer manifests greater oxidation than would an equivalent thickness of an underlying sub-layer of the dielectric layer, further wherein the first electrode layer remains substantially free of an oxide present in the element common to all of the sub-layers ~~is not diffused from the first electrode layer into the sub-layers~~; and

a second electrode layer disposed over said dielectric layer.

14-51. (Cancelled)

52. (Currently Amended) A capacitor dielectric, comprising a plurality of capacitor dielectric layers defining a total thickness ranging from 50 to 70 angstroms, wherein each layer of said plurality is a high-K dielectric defining an individual thickness ranging from 10 to 40 angstroms in thickness, wherein at least one layer of said plurality manifests greater oxidation than would an equal thickness of an underlying layer of said plurality, and wherein each layer of said plurality comprises a metal oxide included within an adjacent layer of said plurality, further

wherein a supporting surface adjacent the plurality of capacitor dielectric layers remains substantially free ~~metal of the metal oxide is not diffused from a supporting surface into the plurality of layers.~~

53. (Original) The capacitor dielectric of claim 52, wherein at least a lowest layer of said plurality defines an individual thickness of about 20 angstroms.

54-59. (Cancelled)

60. (Previously Presented) The substrate assembly of claim 1, wherein the at least two layers of said plurality both include barium.

61. (Previously Presented) The substrate assembly of claim 60, wherein the at least two layers of said plurality both include strontium and titanium.

62. (Currently Amended) A capacitor dielectric, comprising a plurality of capacitor dielectric layers defining a total thickness ranging from 50 to 70 angstroms, wherein each layer of said plurality is a high-K dielectric defining an individual thickness ranging from 10 to 40 angstroms in thickness, wherein at least one layer of said plurality manifests greater oxidation than would an equal thickness of an underlying layer of said plurality, wherein each layer of said plurality comprises a metal oxide included within an adjacent layer of said plurality, and wherein the underlying includes a means to minimize oxidation beyond the plurality of capacitor dielectric layers, further wherein a metal of the metal oxide remains substantially within the plurality of capacitor dielectric layers ~~is not diffused from a supporting surface into the plurality of layers.~~

63. (Currently Amended) A capacitor dielectric, comprising a plurality of capacitor dielectric layers, wherein each layer of the plurality is a high-K dielectric, wherein at least one layer of the plurality manifests a greater oxidation than would be present in an equal thickness of an underlying layer of the plurality, and wherein each layer of the plurality comprises a metal oxide included within an adjacent layer of the plurality, further wherein ~~a metal of the metal oxide~~

~~remains substantially within the plurality of capacitor dielectric layers -is not diffused from a supporting surface into the plurality of layers.~~

64. (Previously Presented) The capacitor dielectric of claim 63, wherein the plurality of capacitor dielectric layers defines a total thickness that ranges between approximately 50 angstroms and approximately 70 angstroms.

65. (Previously Presented) The capacitor dielectric of claim 63, wherein each layer of the plurality defines an individual layer thickness that ranges between approximately 10 angstroms and approximately 40 angstroms.

66. (Previously Presented) The capacitor dielectric of claim 63, wherein at least a lowest layer of the plurality defines an individual thickness of approximately 20 angstroms.

67. (Currently Amended) A capacitor dielectric, comprising a plurality of capacitor dielectric layers, wherein each layer of the plurality is a high-K dielectric, further wherein at least one layer of the plurality manifests a greater oxidation than would an equal thickness of an underlying layer of the plurality, wherein each layer of the plurality comprises a metal oxide included within an adjacent layer of the plurality, and wherein the underlying layer includes a means to minimize oxidation beyond the plurality of capacitor dielectric layers, further wherein ~~a metal of the metal oxide is not diffused from the plurality of high-K dielectric layers into a supporting surface into adjacent~~ the plurality of layers.

68. (Previously Presented) The capacitor dielectric of claim 67, wherein the plurality of capacitor dielectric layers defines a total thickness that ranges between approximately 50 angstroms and approximately 70 angstroms.

69. (Previously Presented) The capacitor dielectric of claim 67, wherein each layer of the plurality defines an individual layer thickness that ranges between approximately 10 angstroms and approximately 40 angstroms.

70. (Previously Presented) The capacitor dielectric of claim 67, wherein at least a lowest layer of the plurality defines an individual thickness of approximately 20 angstroms.